

REMARKS

Examiner Nadav is thanked for his thorough examination of the Subject Patent Application. Amendments have been made to the Claims, and in so doing are now believed to render the Claims distinguishable from Examiners cited prior art and therefore be in condition for allowance.

Referring to the rejection of Claim 20, under 35 USC 102, as being anticipated by Harada et al (US 5,341,026), independent Claim 20, has been amended to more clearly describe applicants structure and in so doing become clearly distinguishable from the Harada et al prior art. It is obvious from studying applicant's structure and comparison to any structure shown in the Harada prior art, that major structural differences surely First applicant describes a straight walled via opening which is critical in applicants quest of terminating the metal ring component of the metal structure at a right angle intersection of a side of the straight walled via hole and the top surface of the insulator layer. The Harada prior art clearly shows in all figures an opening or via hole with a tapered top portion. This would make termination of a metal ring structure impossible at the intersection applicant now describes in amended Claim 20. It can clearly be seen that Harada does not terminate metal structure "100" at this type intersection. If Examiner inspects closely a portion of metal structure "100" in fact overlays a portion of the top surface of insulator "5" on the left side as well as on the right side. (Examiners stated in response that metal segment 101, 102, 103, is not located on left side of via hole where in fact it is, not to the extent of the overlap on the right side however still present, unlike applicants structure, on the left

side).

Secondly applicant in amended claim 20, now describes a metal ring structure in a top portion of the straight walled via hole in which the thickness of the metal ring structure is **continually decreasing** in the straight walled via hole from the sides of, to the center. In direct contrast Harada shows a flat or constant thickness of metal structure "100" in the via hole, certainly not **continually decreasing** in thickness as applicants structure shows. This unique feature is now also included in currently amended Claim 20. Therefore based on the amendment made to Claim 20, and the above arguments, reconsideration of independent Claim 20, rejected based on 35 USC 102, is requested.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 21- 24, under 35 USC 103, as being unpatentable over Harada et al (US 5,341,026), these dependent Claims reference currently amended independent Claim 20. Since it is strongly believed that currently amended independent Claim 20 describes an unique structure that should be allowed, referencing Claims 21 - 24 should also be allowed. Dependent Claims 22 -24 have currently been amended to reflect the amendment of Claim 20, wherein via hole was amended to straight walled via hole. We therefore request Examiner Nadav to reconsider his rejection of Claims 21 - 24, under 35 USC 103, in view of these arguments and the amendments made to the Claims.

Allowance of all Claims is requested.

TSMC99-646BCC

It is requested that should Examiner Nadav not find that the Claims are now Allowable that he call the undersigned attorney at 845-452-5863, to overcome any problems preventing allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen B. Ackerman, Reg # 37,761